

Policies and Procedures

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CHAPTER: General	ISSUED: 11/15/12	REV. A 2/18/15	REV. B 1/30/2020
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PURPOSE

Program review enables the University to focus attention on academic programs and to ensure that their strengths and resources are used in alignment with mission. During the program review process, faculty members have an opportunity to reflect on their work as teachers and scholars and to engage in deliberations about strategic planning, improvement, accountability measures, and resources. Thus, program review offers academic program personnel an opportunity to review and evaluate its program(s), reflect on and refine its vision, and exchange ideas and best practices with others in order to strengthen and improve existing programs. Furthermore, ideas for new programs or innovative solutions to long-standing problems may also emerge.

Creighton requires ongoing assessment of student learning as evidence of academic excellence. Annual evaluations of student learning, in both curricular and co-curricular educational endeavors, measure six common university-level outcomes. The University Learning Outcomes address cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains of learning. Therefore, each school and college use existing assessments of student learning as they provide evidence for the following six common university-level outcomes:

All Creighton graduates will demonstrate:

- (1) disciplinary competence and/or professional proficiency,
- (2) critical thinking skills,
- (3) Ignatian values, to include but not limited to a commitment to an exploration of faith and the promotion of justice,
- (4) the ability to communicate clearly and effectively,
- (5) deliberative reflection for personal and professional formation,
- (6) the ability to work effectively across race, ethnicity, culture, gender, religion, and sexual orientation.

The University Assessment Committee also recognizes the need to report student learning outcomes to a variety of internal and external audiences (e.g., accreditation bodies, disciplinary groups) (University Policy 4.2.5 Annual Assessments). Creighton University embraces a culture of continuous improvement where an ongoing assessment process is not only focused on student learning and educational outcomes but also on ongoing improvement and institutional effectiveness. This requires reviews of programs using external judgments and consultation.

Creighton University's Academic Program Review Policy arises from the University's mission and University Learning Outcomes. *Creighton exists for students and learning*. Creighton University, as a Catholic, Jesuit University dedicated to excellence in undergraduate, graduate and professional programs, is committed to an ongoing process of program evaluation that includes assessment of student learning, reflection, and action that is consistent with the model of Ignatian teaching and learning. It is with a commitment to academic excellence and within an Ignatian tradition and a Jesuit, Catholic campus culture that the University fosters students' learning. Ignatian pedagogy "aims at formation which includes but goes

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beyond academic mastery.” Creighton graduates will be persons for and with others.

Academic program review assists in identifying strong programs that need to be maintained and may help identify programs that need modification, consolidation, or elimination from the University’s academic portfolio.

POLICY

Creighton University is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. The Higher Learning Commission requires all institutions to maintain a practice of regular academic program review and evidence of acting on the findings. Programs can be categorized as degree programs, majors or certificate programs. Academic program review is an evaluation process that allows an institution to review and ensure quality assurance for its academic programs.

This is done through systematic review of degree programs in order to provide evidence that the program is educationally sound and economically viable. Systematic academic program review provides a vehicle for ensuring the following:

- Evidence of educational quality and consistency with national trends
- Documentation of student performance and achievement of stated program outcomes within the context of the University mission
- Evaluation of resources including student support, faculty, and space
- Improvement of educational quality and strategies for improvement
- An evaluative process which identifies strengths and weaknesses with a forward-looking projection
- Program review results should result in action

External program review shall normally be conducted every seven (7) years unless a different schedule is required by an external accrediting body. For those programs that are in units or disciplines that undergo specialized accreditation, the on-site evaluation report, accreditation commission decisions and a record of changes made in response to the report will serve as the external evaluation process.

New academic programs that do not fall under specialized accreditation will be scheduled for an academic program review when they have at least one cohort of graduates to evaluate progress and viability. Academic program review may also occur in response to a request from the program, Dean, or Provost (or his or her designee).

Department chairs and/or graduate program directors, in consultation with the Teaching and Learning Center, will produce a Self Study document which will be shared with a team of external and internal reviewers. The reviewers will respond with a report that offers recommendations and advice regarding the future direction of

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the program. The Self Study report and Reviewers Report will provide the basis for a written action plan prepared by the program in consultation with the Dean(s) that will be reviewed and approved by the Provost and President.

Procedures associated with this policy can be found on the following *Attachment A*.

AMENDMENTS OR TERMINATION OF POLICY

The University reserves the right to modify, amend or terminate this policy at any time.

PROCEDURES

The Provost or Provost's designee (typically the Associate Vice Provost of the Teaching and Learning Center; hereafter referred to as the AVP-TLC) provides oversight over the Academic Program Review process, which includes the following components:

1. Notification to the academic program that a review has been scheduled.
2. Preparation of a Self Study Report
3. Nomination and selection of external and interview reviewers
4. Formal program review
5. Preparation and submission of a Reviewers Report
6. Creation of an Action Plan in response to reviewers' recommendations
7. Formal approval of the Action Plan by the Provost
8. Implementation of the Action Plan
9. Archiving of documentation

An appointed Program Review Coordinator will assume responsibility for the execution and communication of the Program Review process that consists of the following five phases (please refer to the Program Review **Process Flow Diagram** and **Project Plan**):

Phase 1: Planning and Preparation

Notification of Academic Unit

In the academic year prior to the review, the AVP-TLC will, after appropriate consultation with the lead/chair of the academic program/unit and the school/college dean(s), provide notification to the academic unit that a review has been scheduled.

Appointment of the Self-Study Committee

Prior to the self-study submission date, the lead/chair of the academic program/unit should establish a self-study committee (size of this group will vary across programs).

Unit Planning Meetings with University Program Review Staff

The AVP-TLC will conduct an orientation for all programs scheduled to undergo review in the upcoming academic year. The meeting will include the Program Review Director, representatives of the program(s), the supervising school/college dean, and other deans as applicable. The purpose of the meeting is to address the coordination and scheduling of the work associated with the program review.

Nomination/Selection of Reviewers

The lead/chair of the academic program/unit, in consultation with appropriate departmental committee and faculty and with supervising dean's approval, should submit a list of names and qualifications of six potential reviewers (two internal reviewers and four external reviewers).

Reviewers will be expected to conduct the review based on the self-study document and supporting materials. Typically, there will not be an on-campus visit scheduled. At least two of the prospective reviewers should be from the relevant disciplinary area. Typically, the review team will include two external and one internal reviewer.

In consultation with the school/college dean, three reviewers will be confirmed by the AVP-TLC, and invitation made by the Program Review Coordinators.

Phase 2: Self Study Reporting

Document Preparation

The Program Review Coordinator will provide the required data points for conducting a program review from data providers within the University and integrate the collected data points with sections for commentary into the Self-Study Report. The Self-Study Report is an interpretive document used by those reviewing the program to assess current program status and future direction. Data should be analyzed and discussed in relation to the academic program/unit's mission and goals.

Self-Study Report Distribution

Once the Self-Study Committee completes the Self-Study Report, the Program Review Coordinator will verify the completeness of the report and then distribute the Self-Study Report to all appropriate stakeholder areas involved with the program under review.

Phase 3: Program Review

External Review

The review team will analyze the program Self-Study Report and any supporting documents (e.g. course syllabi, faculty CVs, assessment documents), collect additional relevant information as necessary, and conduct telephone or video conferences with appropriate faculty, administrators, students, and community groups.

Reviewers Report

The reviewers (external and internal) will prepare a report identifying program strengths, concerns, and recommendations. A recommendation will be made with a supporting rationale as to whether the program should be maintained, strengthened, monitored or discontinued. If the recommendation is to maintain, strengthen, or monitor the program, the review team also will be asked to provide an assessment of the future direction and strategic initiatives of the unit as they relate to the unit's mission and vision for its program. Generally, the reviewers will submit their report to the Program Review Coordinator for appropriate distribution within three weeks of completing the interviews.

Phase 4: Summary

Executive Summary

Once the reviewer's report is received, the Program Review Coordinator will distribute it, along with the Self Study Report and any supporting documents, to the Program Review Subcommittee of the University Assessment Committee. The Program Review Subcommittee will review the provided documents to identify any gaps or omissions on the part of the Self-Study Committee and Reviewers and indicate how the program supports the University's mission. The UAC Program Review Subcommittee will re-affirm the recommendations being made or propose an alternative that will be delivered in an Executive Summary Report.

Phase 5: Recommendation and Action

Program Response and Action Plan

The Executive Summary will be distributed to the lead/chair of the academic unit, the Dean(s), and the AVP-TLC. A meeting with the lead/chair of the academic unit and the Dean(s) will be held to review the Reviewers Report and the Executive Summary, and establish a plan of action to strengthen, improve or discontinue the academic program. The lead/chair of the academic unit will prepare a Response Memo

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Attachment A

and Action Plan which addresses the reviewers' concerns and recommendations. The action plan should include action items with appropriate evaluation metrics and should indicate the individual(s) responsible and timeline for implementation of each action item.

The Response Memo and Action Plan will then be sent to the Dean(s) for their response and final recommendation for the program. The completed Response Memo and Action Plan will be returned to the Program Review Coordinator, who will distribute the Executive Summary Report, Response Memo and Action Plan to the Provost.

Provost Review and Approval

The Provost will review the Response Memo and Action Plan, and will either approve the action plan as submitted, approve the action plan with revisions, or reject the action plan. The Provost will indicate the final decision for the program in a Provost Memo, which will be submitted to the President, with copies to the academic unit, Dean(s), and the AVP-TLC.

Programs for which the final recommendation is that the program be reviewed again in 4 years or longer will be expected to follow the procedures for a complete program review as outlined in this policy, including the submission of a Self Study document. Programs for which the final recommendation is that the program be reviewed again in 3 years or less will undergo an interim review process. The program will be required to submit an Interim Review Report which will provide an update on how they have addressed or are addressing concerns raised during the original review. This report will be reviewed by the Dean(s), who will make a recommendation to the Provost regarding a timeline for subsequent review which will not exceed 7 years from the date of the original review.

If the recommendation is for discontinuation, procedures are followed according to the Faculty Handbook, Article III, Section H.3(c). In the case of program discontinuation or suspension of applications/admissions, the dean(s) shall implement a communication plan to ensure that all appropriate parties are notified of this decision. This will include the program director, program faculty, current and prospective students, Enrollment Management, University Communications and Marketing, University Registrar, the EDGE Office, and Dean's Council.

Permanent Record of the Program Review

The Self-Study Document, the Reviewers Report, Executive Summary Report, Response Memo and Action Plan, and Provost Memo will be considered as the permanent record of the review. These summary documents will be collated by the Program Review Coordinator and archived on the Program Review collaboration site.

SCOPE

- I. Key Features of Program Review: Key features of the program review include:
 - The review is evaluative in nature, not merely descriptive.
 - The review of programs is forward-looking.
 - The review must include academic strengths and weaknesses.
 - The review is objective and is based on the self-study document (specialized accreditation process may serve as program review with additional focused questions).
 - The review is an independent process.
 - The review findings should result in action.

- II. Key Questions in Program Review: The program review will focus on the following questions:
 1. Is the program advancing the state of the discipline or profession?

2. Is the teaching and training of students effective?
3. Does the program meet the institution's goals?
4. Does the program respond to the profession's/discipline's needs?
5. How is the program assessed by experts in the field?

III. Key Elements for Successful Program Review: A successful program review is based on key elements including:

1. Clear, consistent guidelines
2. Administrative support (e.g., accurate institutional data; resources for external reviewers)
3. Departmental self-study
4. Student participation
5. Review committee
6. Reviewers (internal and external)
7. Final report and recommendations/actions
8. Link program review process to outcomes-based assessment

IV. The program review consists of three goals:

Goal I: Recruitment and admission of a qualified and diverse applicant pool: Evaluation of success of recruitment activities should include the trends in:

- Average admission profiles/entrance exams (e.g., GRE, ACT/SAT, GMAT, LSAT, MCAT, etc.) are within acceptable limits.
- Admission records demonstrate adequate selectivity.
- Assess the trends in credit hours generated over time (stable, increasing or decreasing).
- Diversity of student by gender and ethnicity.
- Number of students admitted and credit hours generated in each graduate program is adequate to assure quality of education and opportunity for interaction.

Goal II: Assure Quality of Programs: Evaluation of success in achieving quality of programs includes trends in:

- Student quality:
 - All criteria considered in evaluating Goal I, plus, for doctoral programs, delivery of student papers at prestigious meetings.
 - Quality of comprehensive examinations or the program equivalent (e.g., capstones, theses, dissertations, portfolios upon graduation).
- Quality of Instruction/Faculty:
 - Examination of Curriculum Vitae of existing faculty during cyclical review;
 - Examination of curriculum vitae of adjunct faculty hired to teach courses;
 - On-going evaluation of student satisfaction and student learning outcomes;
 - Evidence of rigor in expectations;
 - Scholarly productivity of faculty;
 - Extramural funding obtained in comparison to benchmark institutions;
 - Satisfaction surveys of graduates and alumni at specified intervals (e.g., every 3 or 5 years post-graduation)
- Quality of resources available:
 - Adequacy of laboratory and classroom space for program;
 - Adequacy of technology to support purposes of program;

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- Adequacy of library resources for supporting the program and the scholarly work of the faculty teaching in the program;
- Revenue and expenditure history since last program review cycle
- Quality of outcomes:
 - Assessment of formative and summative outcomes
 - Programmatic goals and objectives, stated as learning outcomes, that are operational and specific;
 - Procedures to regularly evaluate the extent to which the goals and objectives are being achieved
 - Evidence that results of the assessment are used to improve the program
- Five-year evaluation
 - Employment type and evaluation of appropriateness of education received in obtaining and performing well in this employment
 - Number of students obtaining a master's who are accepted into a doctoral program
 - Quality of doctoral/post-doctoral positions obtained
 - Alumni satisfaction

Goal III: Promote Scholarship among Faculty: Evaluation of success in promoting scholarship among faculty can include trends in:

- Self-report of number and quality of publications resulting from seed grants;
- Self-report of activities and publications (number and quality) resulting from summer faculty fellowships;
- Self-report of number of publications by faculty per calendar year;
- Report of number of books published;
- External reviews/awards of any faculty publications;
- Evidence of dissemination of the results of faculty publications;
- Evidence of increased grant funding;
- Presentations at significant meetings of disciplinary/professional peers;
- Evidence of impact of scholarly activity on the discipline/profession;
- Development of collaborations in scholarly endeavors.